



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### **DEQ makes ozone recommendations for new standard**

BATON ROUGE – On Thursday, the Department of Environmental Quality submitted recommendations for ozone nonattainment designations based on the new 2008 federal ozone standards. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency strengthened the standard for the pollutant ozone by lowering it to 75 parts per billion.

Under the new standard, 11 parishes were recommended as nonattainment. This adds six new parishes statewide to the five-parish area around Baton Rouge that was nonattainment under previous standards. Those parishes recommended as nonattainment are: Ascension, Caddo, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lafourche, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, Saint John the Baptist, and West Baton Rouge. The five-parish Baton Rouge area recently achieved attainment for both the one-hour standard and the previous eight-hour standard that is in effect until 2010.

The approach for designation under this standard is different than in the past because the department is making recommendations on a parish-by-parish basis instead of on entire metropolitan statistical areas.

“We have seen evidence where one monitor may put an entire MSA out of attainment, even though there is a monitor in another parish within the same MSA that is meeting the new ozone standard,” said DEQ Secretary Harold Leggett. “By working with our local and federal partners, we will be able to improve air quality in the area where it needs improving the most on a parish level.”

EPA has until March 12, 2010 to make final designations under the new standard. Final designations will be based on the DEQ recommendations, plus additional air quality data for 2009. Once designations are made official, parishes will likely have three years to get into attainment. Based upon the severity of the nonattainment or classification, a parish may have to take federally required measures to reach attainment.

Past state and federal regulations have included lowering permitted pollution standards for industry, implementing cleaner fuels for gas-powered engines and increasing air-monitoring capability in ozone-prone areas. DEQ has also formed an Ozone Action program that informs citizens, industry and local governments if high levels of ozone are forecast. People then take voluntary steps such as carpooling, driving less and not mowing their yards until after 6 p.m. to help limit air pollution.

To view tips on the voluntary steps you can take, to see what consequences a nonattainment area may face, or to see what parishes will be out of attainment at 75 ppb, go to [www.deq.louisiana.gov](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov)